



Rob Hampton photo

Eli Leidig (right) tightens a loose seat clamp while Ryan Montero, a Bike Works volunteer, holds things steady.

FUNWORK FOR FREE WHEELS

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lubing a chain, all Earn-A-Bike kids learn valuable work habits. "They learn that they have to work to earn something, and they have to complete a job that we hold them accountable to: 'What did you do today? Did you actually finish? Did you clean up your tools? Did you work the whole time you were here?' And they keep that on a time card."

But it doesn't take much cajoling to keep the Earn-A-Bike kids on task. Many are motivated to earn their first BMX, or customize their dream bike. Others come to simply hone their skills and enjoy the company of other bikers. One thing they all have in common is pride in their work.

The pride is apparent as the kids finish the day's labors. Quyen Tang, 12, has been quiet and serious all afternoon, adjusting a mountain bike's clattering derailleur, or gear-changing mechanism. As the other kids return wrenches to wall racks and put broken parts in the recycling bin, Quyen tests his handiwork by

cranking the bike's pedals and clicking through the gears. The chain slips with quiet precision from one cog to the next, like water running over stones. Quyen looks up, and seeing someone watching, breaks into a grin. "See that?" he says.

To learn more about Bike Works or Earn-a-Bike, log on to www.scn.org/bikeworks or call (206) 725-9408.